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SUBJECT: ITALY SUPPORTS CONCEPT OF SEEBRIG DEPLOYMENT

REF: A) STATE 139663 B) STATE 110073

1. Summary. Italy confirms its support for the concept of a SEEBRIG deployment as described in reftels and will work with the U.S. on details of possible implementation. End Summary.

2. On August 4, DATT delivered Reftel A talking points to LTG Fabrizio Castegnetti, newly appointed chief of the Italian Interforce Operational Command (COI). In his previous post as Deputy CHOD, Castegnetti had already promoted the concept of an Afghanistan mission for SEEBRIG at the most recent DCHOD meeting during Italy's turn as SEEBRIG commander (Note: SEEBRIG command has now passed to Bulgaria). In regard to a possible SEEBRIG deployment in Afghanistan, Castegnetti said he did not immediately see how Italy itself could come up with logistical resources because Italy is currently overstretched in overseas military operations. However, Castegnetti said that his commitment to the concept of the SEEBRIG deployment remained firm, that he would study ways to move the project forward, and that he would work with the U.S. in developing ideas. The Embassy will approach Castegnetti again on SEEBRIG deployment when Italy goes back to work after August holidays.

3. Comment. Castegnetti's new role as chief of COI, his previous involvement in SEEBRIG, and his longstanding close working relationship with this Embassy, mean that he will be an effective partner with the U.S. in laying the groundwork for a SEEBRIG deployment. End Comment.

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